Blackboard FAQ

1) **Inability to log into Blackboard.**
   - Check the SYSTEM ALERT message area on the Blackboard Login page. This lists the Blackboard maintenance outage windows. Blackboard will not be available during these time slots.
   - If there are no ALERTS, the same password that works on your Active Directory (Email account for APS) works with Blackboard. When a password is reset in Active Directory through your LAN or Email password change, it automatically alters the Password in Blackboard.
   - Try logging in with your new Active Directory Password that you may have recently altered.
   - Alternatively, work with the **Service Desk (830-8080)** to have your password reset. This will resolve the issue and enable you to log into Blackboard.
   - **Note:** Some organizations and courses in Blackboard are available for guest access and are accessible through the BB login page (Under the DEPARTMENTS and GUEST ACCESS COURSES modules and the TRAINING AND RESOURCES tab) and do not require a Blackboard login.

2) **Which browser should I use with Blackboard?**
   - Although Blackboard works with *Internet Explorer* and *Firefox* on *Windows* and *Safari* and *Firefox* on *Mac*, for the most part Blackboard works best with Firefox.
   - Firefox can be downloaded and installed for free from http://www.mozilla.com

3) **I am not sure how to perform certain operations in Blackboard and/or need a course shell.**
   - The first requisite for this is attending a 2 day Blackboard Training conducted by the Learning Technologies team. This class covers a lot of Blackboard basics and should be able to answer several of your questions.
   - Instructions to sign up for the Blackboard Training are available on the Blackboard Login page under the DEPARTMENTS module (TECHNOLOGY).
   - If you have taken the Blackboard Training already, please go through this FAQ document to see if answers to your questions are available in this document.
   - If the answers are not available in this FAQ document, please contact Anand Iyer (anand.iyer@aps.edu) or Amy Phipps (Phipps@aps.edu) in the Learning Technology team.

4) **How do I report issues that I run into when using Blackboard?**
   - When using Blackboard if you run into issues (e.g. error on Grade Book, unable to enroll students in the course, students cannot view grade-book etc.) report this issue to the APS **Service Desk (830-8080).**
   - While reporting an issue, remember to provide as many relevant details as possible (course or organization name, ids of the students or participants, operations that were being performed when the error was encountered, screen shots where possible and so on). The more details we have, the better we can work with Blackboard to get this issue resolved.

5) **How do I submit requests (Batch Enrollment, Course copy etc.) to the Learning Technology team?**
   - Submit a request to the APS **Service Desk (830-8080)** with a copy of the Excel comma delimited (CSV) file with the Batch Enroll details.

6) **I am seeing inconsistent behavior (Red Error Screen, missing buttons etc.) in Blackboard.**
   - Repeat the operation in Blackboard. Often this resolves the issue.
   - Your Blackboard session may have timed out – logoff and log into Blackboard again.
   - Clear the Browser cache and/or shutdown the browser and/or reboot your Windows PC.
   - If these suggestions do not work then email a description of this issue to the APS **Service Desk (830-8080)** with relevant details.

Blackboard FAQ

7) I cannot view my courses/organizations in MY COURSES.

- Check the MY PLACES link on the APS Blackboard Banner (top of the page).
- Courses and organizations that are invisible in the MY COURSES are often visible in MY PLACES.
- All the courses and organizations that you are a part of in any role (e.g. teacher/leader, student/participant) should show up either in your MY PLACES or MY COURSES area.

8) How do I rename my course/organization in Blackboard?

- Open your course/organization from within Blackboard.
- Access the CUSTOMIZATION option within the course's CONTROL PANEL (lower left corner).
- Within the CUSTOMIZATION option, select the PROPERTIES option.
- On the PROPERTIES page, the first item is the COURSE/ORGANIZATION NAME. Altering this, changes the course/organization name. Once you are done, hit the SUBMIT button on the page.

9) How do I hide my unavailable/inactive courses from showing up in the MY COURSES area?

- Blackboard displays all the courses that you are teaching, in your MY COURSES area, sorted alphabetically, irrespective of whether the course is available. Blackboard doesn't have an option to hide unavailable courses in this list. This clutters up the MY COURSE area.
- The only way to ensure that your currently active courses show up at the top of the list is to rename your course (refer to question 8 above) and prefix the course name with an *. This ensures that when course names are alphabetically sorted, course names with a * prefix will appear at the top of the list, making these course easily accessible.

10) Students cannot view the course/course content (lessons, assignments, Grade Center etc.).

- Course Availability - open the course, access the course control panel (lower left corner), access the course PROPERTIES, set the 3rd property (Set Availability) to yes.
- Student Enrollment - From the course control panel, select USERS AND GROUPS and enroll the student in the course. Set Student availability to Yes.
- Adaptive Release Rules – Check the adaptive release rules (e.g. date range, chronological sequence for sequential content) to ensure that content is active and accurately setup.
- Grade Center - Create a GRADE CENTER button in the COURSE CONTENT area (top right side) within a course. To create this button, click on the + sign in the course content area and select the CREATE TOOL LINK option and choose the MY GRADE tool. Name the button as desired. If the MY GRADE option does not appear in the drop down box when you select CREATE TOOL LINK on the + sign in the course content area (top right side within a course), then you will have to first navigate to the COURSE CONTROL PANEL (lower left side within a course). Select the CUSTOMIZATION option and within this select TOOL AVAILABILITY. Once inside this option, ensure that the MY GRADE option is selected. If this is not selected, MY GRADE will not show up as a tool for the course.

11) How do I check the enrollments in my course/organization?

- Access the course/organization control panel in Blackboard – bottom left hand corner.
- Access the USERS & GROUPS option and select the USER option.
- On the screen where it says USER NAME STARTS WITH, enter a **%** sign in the blank box and hit the GO button. This brings up a list of Blackboard users enrolled in the course/organization.

Blackboard FAQ

12) How do I drop students from my Blackboard class?

- PLEASE DO NOT DELETE A STUDENT from the class. When you delete a student from the course, all the work that they have put into the course thus far is lost for good.
- To drop a student from the course make them UNAVAILABLE in the course:
  - Access the course control panel (lower left corner in the course)
  - Select USERS AND GROUPS
  - Bring up the class enrollments (question above)
  - Click on the double arrow next to the student's name and select the EDIT option
  - Within this, in option 4 (ROLE AND AVAILABILITY) set the student's availability to NO.

13) Which file formats can I use to upload content into Blackboard?

Documents, Images, Audio files and Video clips can be used with Blackboard. Though, the Blackboard user manual indicates several different file formats that can be used with Blackboard, generally the following formats are best suited for the different file types considering all the possible Browser and Operating System combinations we have at APS. Browser plug-ins may be required to play some of this content:

File attachment types	
Documents	.pdf (preferred for text docs), .doc, .xls, .ppt
Image	.jpg (static images), .gif (animation)
Audio	.mp3
Video	.mov (quicktime), .swf (shockwave)

14) I would like to make my course/organization GUEST accessible without needing Blackboard login.

- Access the CUSTOMIZATION option within the course control panel (lower left hand corner).
- Within the customization option access the GUEST AND PARENT ACCESS option.
- Select YES for the allow GUEST ACCESS option.
- Work with the learning technologies group (Anand Iyer – anand.iyer@aps.edu or Amy Phipps – Phipps@aps.edu) to get this course/organization listed on the Blackboard Login page for individuals to access without signing into Blackboard.

15) How do I access the Blackboard Manual / Help /Tutorials?

- Access the APS ONLINE HELP tab in Blackboard.
- Open up any course or organization in Blackboard. Access the HELP section in the course CONTROL PANEL (lower left-hand corner). The MANUAL and QUICK TUTORIAL sections within HELP have the Blackboard manual/help.
- Peer-to-Peer knowledge sharing is another key strategy to get help on how to use Blackboard.
- Several academic institutions have Blackboard Training materials on the web for public access (no login required). Search for phrases like "Blackboard Training" on GOOGLE and access training materials for Blackboard Learn 9.0. An example of a website that has several HOW TO MOVIES (video tutorials) is the website for the University of Southern California https://blackboard.usc.edu/